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BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

*Adapted from the tale by
Madame Le Prince de Beaumont*

Illustrated by Jim Kersell



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Madame Le Prince de Beaumont
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Illustrated by Jim Kersell

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nce upon a time, there lived a wealthy merchant, his three daughters and two sons. The family lived in a big white mansion with beautiful flower gardens all around. The two eldest daughters dressed in their most beautiful dresses each day and waited for their suitors to arrive. Beauty, the youngest daughter, liked to wander through the gardens or simply sit and read about faraway lands.





Then tragedy struck the merchant. His fleet of ships all sank in the ocean during a violent storm, and the family's fortunes were lost in the sea. The merchant had to sell his mansion to pay his debts, and the family moved to a small farmhouse in the country.

The two older daughters, Janine and Margaux, complained and complained about living in the tiny farm house and about not having lovely new dresses to wear. Beauty, however, tended to the house while her father and brothers worked in the fields. Janine and Margaux were jealous of Beauty's happiness. Beauty enjoyed being with her family in the fresh country air.



One day the merchant received good news. A report came from the city that one of his ships had survived the storm and was coming into port. The merchant immediately made plans to go into town to collect his riches from the ship.

"Bring us back beautiful dresses, Father," pleaded Janine.

"And precious jewels to wear," pleaded Margaux.

"Okay, okay," answered the merchant. "And what do you want?" he asked Beauty.

Beauty could think of nothing she wanted. She thought and thought. Finally, she said, "A rose. I do so miss the roses we used to have."

"Then you shall have a rose," said the merchant, and he mounted his horse and left for the city.

When the merchant reached the city's port, he was disappointed. The sails of the merchant's ship were tattered and torn; the hull was damaged, and the cargo inside was ruined.





Unhappy, the merchant mounted his horse and set out for home. On his way, the sky grew black, and it started to rain. The merchant looked around for shelter and saw a dim light in the distance. He rode toward the light until he found himself before a magnificent castle. He got down off his horse and entered the castle through the open door.

He found a room with a table set for one with a lavish feast. The merchant called and called, but no one answered.

I'm sure my host won't mind if I eat, thought the merchant.

So, the merchant sat down and ate the feast.

After feasting, the merchant was very tired. He called and called once again to his host, but again no one answered.

I'm sure my host won't mind if I sleep, thought the merchant.

So the merchant found a bed chamber and laid down. As soon as he lay down, the merchant fell into deep sleep.

The next morning, the merchant awoke to find breakfast set out for him in the chamber. He dressed and ate breakfast, and then he called and called once again to his host, but again no one answered.

The merchant wanted to get an early start back home; so he left the castle to find his horse. On the way, he passed an exquisite rose garden. The merchant remembered his youngest daughter's request for a rose and picked a beautiful red rose for Beauty.

No sooner than the merchant had picked the rose, a horrible roar pierced the morning air. The roar came from a Beast dressed in fine clothes who appeared behind the merchant.

"I gave you food and sheltered you, and you repay me by stealing from my rose garden," roared the hideous Beast. "You shall pay for the flower with your life."

"I didn't think there was any harm in taking one flower. It was for my daughter, Beauty. She loves roses so," said the merchant, trembling. "Please don't kill me. I have to take care of my children."

“Beauty can save you, then. Go back to your daughter. If she agrees to come live with me in my castle forever, I will spare your life. I will give you two days. At the end of the second day, one of you shall return to my castle,” snarled the Beast.

The merchant climbed on his horse and rode swiftly to his home.



When he arrived home, he told his family the entire tale of his misfortune and his adventure with the Beast.

"So children, I must go to the Beast tomorrow evening," said the merchant.

"No, Father," replied Beauty. "I will go and live with the Beast. It was for me that you picked the rose."

The merchant was upset, but he knew that he could not convince Beauty not to go in his place. So, the next morning, he and Beauty set out for the Beast's castle.

When the merchant and his daughter arrived at the castle, it was almost nightfall. They entered the castle and found the table set for two with a lavish feast upon it. The two sat down to eat because they were very hungry after riding all day.

"The Beast can't be that horrible," said Beauty. "He has given us this wonderful feast to eat after our hard journey."

The merchant could not bring himself to describe the Beast to his daughter. He knew that she was not prepared for the sight.



After dinner, the merchant and his daughter wandered through the castle until they found a sitting room. By the fire, a figure could be seen sitting in the shadows. The figure rose and turned so that Beauty could see its face. Beauty gasped.



The Beast was more hideous than she had imagined.

"I'm sorry that I frighten you," said the Beast. "Have you come here willingly?"

"Yes," replied Beauty.

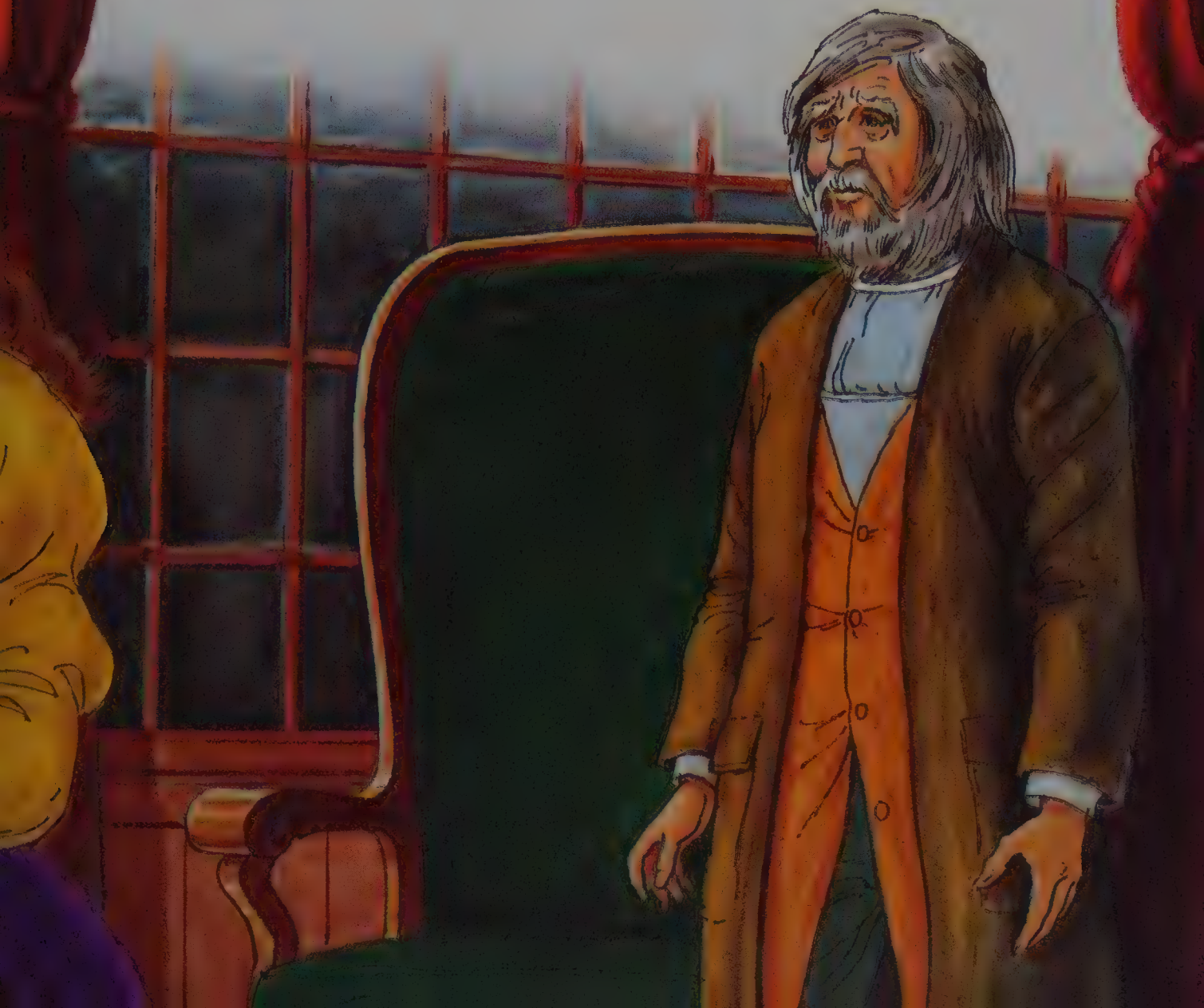
"Then you may live here with me forever.



“Merchant, you must leave at dawn and return to your home. When you arrive home, you will find a trunk filled with riches waiting for you. I will take care of your daughter forever,” said the Beast.

“You will each find a bed chamber prepared for you in which to sleep tonight,” the Beast said and turned and left the room.

Beauty said goodnight to her father and went to bed.



During the night, Beauty had wonderful dreams of a handsome prince seated on the other side of a lake. A fairy came to her in the dream and told her, "Do not fear what you do not know. Your kindness will be rewarded."

Beauty awoke in the morning and remembered her curious dream. She dressed in a gown that had been laid out for her in the night and went to say goodbye to her father.

"Goodbye, Beauty," said the merchant with tears in his eyes. "I will try to think of something that will make the Beast release you."

"I will be fine," said Beauty. "He seems to be a kind Beast."

With that, the merchant kissed Beauty, mounted his horse, and rode slowly into the forest.

Beauty wandered about the castle's gardens discovering all sorts of wonderful flowers lining the walkways and brightly colored birds nested in the trees. She wandered about all day until the sun started to sink in the west.



That night Beauty ate another wonderful meal, but this time, she ate alone. After she had eaten, the Beast came into the room. The Beast told her wonderful stories of his travels, and the evening passed pleasantly. Before the Beast left, he asked Beauty, "Is there anything you desire that I have not provided you?"

"No," Beauty answered because she could not think of anything.

"Will you marry me, Beauty?" asked the Beast.



"I cannot marry you, Beast, because I do not love you."

After her answer, the Beast turned slowly and left the room.

The next day, Beauty explored the library that adjoined her chambers. Beauty looked at all of the exquisite books that lined the walls. She took down a book about a faraway land and began to read. She spent the day reading and gazing out at the beautiful gardens.

That night after dinner, the Beast entered the room again.

"Have you ever been to this faraway land?" inquired Beauty of the Beast, while pointing to the picture in her book.

"Yes, many times," said the Beast. And he told her of his travels.

Beauty enjoyed his tales and adventures, and the evening passed quickly.

Before leaving, again the Beast asked, "Will you marry me, Beauty?"

"I enjoy your company, Beast, but I cannot marry you because I do not love you."

After her answer, the Beast turned slowly and left the room.

This went on for many nights. Each evening, the Beast would tell marvelous stories of his travels. There was no place, it seemed, that Beauty could mention to the Beast that he had not visited. The Beast told her marvelous tales of emperors and their grand castles, beautiful ladies and handsome lords, natives on far away islands, and majestic mountains that reached the sky. She looked forward to every evening when the Beast would tell her of his great adventures on the open seas.

Each evening after the Beast told his tales, he would ask Beauty to marry him. Each evening, Beauty would say, "I do like you, Beast, but I cannot marry you because I do not love you." Each evening, the Beast turned slowly and left the room.





Each night, Beauty would also have the same dream with the handsome prince and the beautiful fairy who would always tell her, "Do not fear what you do not know. Your kindness will be rewarded." And each morning, Beauty would remember the dream and wonder what it meant.

One day while walking through the castle, Beauty thought of her father. She looked into a giant mirror and saw the image of her father lying in bed. He looked very ill. Distressed, she went to find the Beast.



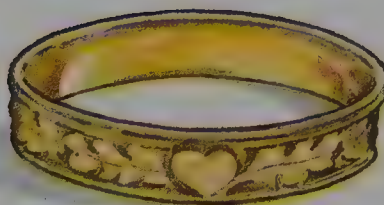
“Beast, I looked in a mirror in the great hall, and I saw my father was very ill.”

“That mirror can only reflect the truth, Beauty,” replied the Beast.

“May I go to him and nurse him back to health? I know he would get better if I went to him,” pleaded Beauty.

“Yes. But you must promise to return to me in two weeks, or I will die of loneliness,” said the Beast. “Here is a ring. You need only to twist the ring twice around your finger to be taken to your father’s house, and twist the ring three times to come back to me.”

“I promise, Beast. Thank you,” replied Beauty, and she went to her room and twisted the ring twice around her finger. Immediately, she fell into an enchanted sleep.





When she awoke, she found herself in her father's house.

The merchant was so glad to see his youngest daughter that he recovered at once. Everyone in the family was happy to see Beauty except for Janine and Margaux. Beauty's sisters were jealous of Beauty's fine clothes and precious jewels.

The two weeks seemed to fly by to Beauty. She spent them tending to her father, wandering in the countryside, and reading her books. But she had missed the Beast's tales of his travels and his pleasant company. Although Beauty did not want to leave her father, she promised to return to the Beast. She knew she would have to go. She discovered that she was actually looking forward to returning to see the Beast and hear his marvelous tales.

Janine and Margaux schemed to make Beauty break her promise to the Beast.

Surely, the Beast would give her no more riches if she disobeyed him, they thought.

After Beauty's two weeks were up, Janine and Margaux pleaded, "Please stay with us longer. We haven't seen you in such a long time. One more week won't make a difference to that horrible Beast. And father is doing so much better since you've returned."

The sisters' arguments were convincing, and Beauty agreed to stay an extra week. Her sisters rejoiced in their deceit, thinking that surely the Beast would take all Beauty's riches and jewels away.



That night, Beauty dreamed a terrible dream. The Beast was lying in the garden. His skin was as white as snow, and he was dying. Beauty awoke suddenly. She could not let the Beast die. He had been so kind to her, and she could not bear to let him die.

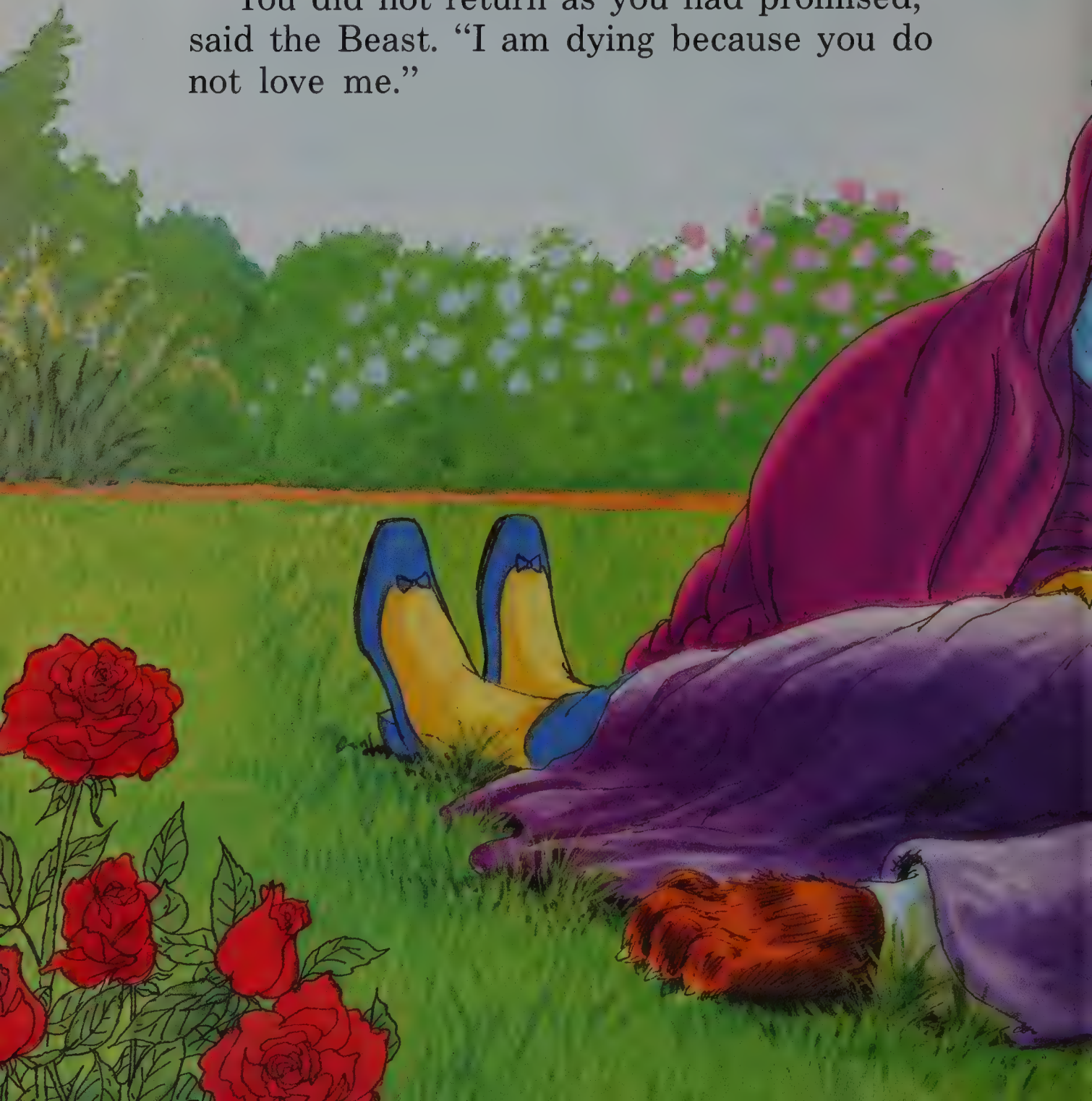
Beauty turned the ring on her finger three times to go back to her Beast and hoped she would not be too late. She fell immediately into an enchanted sleep.



Beauty awoke in the Beast's castle. She ran to the garden to find the Beast. She searched and searched until she came to his lifeless body lying amongst the flowers.

"Beast, Beast, please don't die. I did not mean to abandon you," pleaded Beauty.

"You did not return as you had promised," said the Beast. "I am dying because you do not love me."



“Oh, Beast, I did not think that I loved you before I went away. But, I missed you so while we were apart. I do love you, and I will marry you. Please don’t die,” pleaded Beauty.

She closed her eyes, and a tear rolled down her cheek.



When she opened her eyes again, the Beast was gone, and the handsome prince from her dreams sat in his place.

“Please, Beauty, don’t be afraid,” said the prince. “I am your Beast. You have saved me from the evil spell that was placed upon me.



“I used to judge people only on their exterior without looking for the beauty inside them. When I cast an evil witch from my castle because she was so very ugly, the evil witch turned me from a prince into a horrible beast. Her spell could only be broken when a beautiful maiden would love me for who I was inside my beastly exterior and agree to marry me.”



“We shall be married tomorrow. I will summon your family and all of the lords and ladies of the land for the wedding.”

Beauty embraced her prince, and they were married the very next day. Beauty and the Beast lived happily ever after.



BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

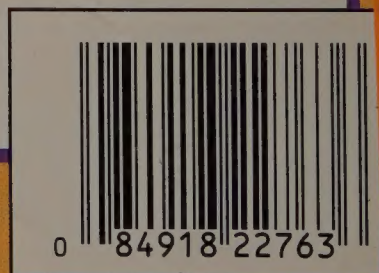
A fairy came to Beauty in the dream and told her, "Do not fear what you do not know. Your kindness will be rewarded."

Beauty and the Beast is a timeless classic that demonstrates love's power to conquer all. This new, fully-illustrated edition from Worthington Press will enchant children of all ages.



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